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ABSTRACT

The grassroots parent-based effort to reform public education predated, by more than a decade, the national awakening to problems in the schools. It began when parents became aware that the educational establishment perceived its "duty" to mold children's attitudes as a higher priority than the school's cognitive function and certainly superior to parental prerogatives to guide their children's spiritual and moral growth. Parents seek to increase school standards, return teaching to the basics, counter the promotion of ethical relativism and value neutrality, prevent children from being subjected to federally funded experimental programs, gain educational information, and build more power for themselves. Toward these ends, many parent groups have formed, funded by parents themselves, and have lent support to legislation such as the Hatch Amendment and to fighting the National Education Association in states such as Arizona. Parents have learned that federal dollars allow the federal government to exercise control over local schools, as a variety of programs are instituted; this money must be controlled in order to restore basic education and end the ideological manipulation of children. The solution to this nation's educational problems is not money, but a change in priorities. (DCS)

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The Parents Movement: Grassroots Origins

Marcia Sielaff

Former Congressman John Conlan called it a "floating crap game." That is an irreverent but accurate description of a grassroots parent-based effort to reform public education that pre-dated, by more than a decade, the national awakening to problems in the schools.

Conlan used the phrase in 1975 to explain the avalanche of mail which poured into congressional offices about an obscure, federally funded fifth grade social studies program entitled, "Man: A Course of Study," (MACOS). Members of Congress are accustomed to the organized lobbying efforts of well-funded special interest groups. What puzzled them about the MACOS mail was that it was generated by individual parents who had no special interest to promote (outside of the welfare of their children) and no access to large organizational treasuries.

MACOS became the focus of a congressional inquiry when complaints from Conlan's constituents in Phoenix, Arizona, sparked an investigation of the National Science Foundation and its support of the program. Hearings before a U.S. House subcommittee[1] exposed questionable funding procedures for development and marketing.

After MACOS was developed in 1969, at a cost to taxpay-

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ers of over $6.5 million, more than 50 publishers declined the opportunity to market it because of its controversial content. Undeterred, NSF arranged a lucrative contract for a small publishing firm in Washington which enabled the firm to undercut competition from other curriculum materials developed in the private sector. Millions more tax dollars were channeled into direct marketing and promotion of MACOS for the commercial publisher.[2]

Conlan summarized the program for his colleagues in the House:

> MACOS is designed to mold children's social attitudes and beliefs along lines that are almost always at variance with the beliefs and moral values of their parents and local communities . . .
>
> Recurring themes of the 60 lessons include communal living, elimination of the weak and elderly in society, sexual permissiveness and promiscuity, violence and primitive behavior.
>
> Many psychological devices are used through the course, including role playing . . . and encounter sessions in which students are required to openly discuss intimate aspects of their personal lives and those of their families and friends.[3]

Dr. Rhoda Lorand, a child psychologist, described the effect on children who participated in the program:

> The program not only forces the children to be pre-occupied with infanticide and senilicide, as well as the gory details of animal slaughter, it also aims at making the children accepting of these practices. Further, the children are forced to identify with the customs, through role-playing, even of Eskimo myths. In the enactment of one myth, a child about whom I was told was required to play the role of the elderly grandmother who clings to a boat which is about to leave her behind to die. Another child was assigned the role of her offspring who chops off the grandmother's fingers so that she cannot delay the departure . . . It is incredible that this exercise in sadism should be foisted upon a captive audience of children who are undergoing the crucial process of adaptation to our culture and civilization. Equally incredible is the fact that a program so lacking in awareness of children's emotional development and

needs, as well as in the purposes of education and the processes of character development, should ever have been given government support.[4]

Although Lorand was understandably shocked by the program, MACOS was, and is, consistent with the view—dominant in colleges of education, the National Education Association, many state departments of education and the Washington Education Bureaucracy—that the function of public schools is to bring about such social changes as the educational elite should command.

The reaction of a New York state education official,[5] to objections from a parent in the Albany-based group, Parents of New York United (PONY-U) was typical of establishment response to complaints about MACOS. He chided the parent for attempting to impose her religious beliefs on the school system and politely invited her to take her child elsewhere.

> Should you desire that your child be indoctrinated with your own religious views, that is your prerogative, and there are private academies which will provide that service.

The official made no effort to conceal the fact that if the child were to remain in the public system, he would be indoctrinated with a contrary world view.

> . . . it is the prerogative of the school, indeed, its duty, in a fair and unbiased manner, to develop a student's ability to examine his own as well as other values (systems or beliefs) than his own, in order to assist him to be able to make considered judgements concerning vital issues of his present and future days. That I, as a parent, may be opposed to certain ideas (whatever their nature) does not, and should not, obviate my child's need to know that other views exist . . .

In attempting to label the hapless parent as narrowly religious in contrast with his own enlightened attitude, the New York school official avoided dealing with the parent's legitimate concerns. He simply refused to concede that the parent's view represented a credible opposition.

Whose Children? Whose Values?

The educational establishment has perceived its "duty" to mold children's attitudes as higher than the schools' cognitive function and certainly superior to parental prerogatives to guide their children's spiritual and moral growth.

These educators have failed to come to terms with the idea that they are using the tax supported school system to promote a world view which, in so far as it expresses a consistent philosophy or system of belief, is every bit as religious as any religion.

Alan L. Lockwood of the University of Wisconsin calls this philosophy "ethical relativism:"

> . . . that one person's values are as good as another's; everyone is entitled to his own opinion; and when it comes to morality, there is no one way of showing that one opinion is better than another.[6]

Ronald Berman, former director of the National Endowment for the Humanities, associates this view with the decline in scholastic achievement:

> One reason for the intellectual decline among both academics and students is the belief that all ideas are somehow equal—that what we see on television or assimilate from the counterculture not only deserves academic credit, but means as much as anything stored up by libraries or learned by experience . . . And finally, there is the goal of studying what entertains us, which accounts for the otherwise astonishing presence in the schools of astrology, science fiction and other amusements.[7]

The philosophy described by Berman is one of "value neutrality" and is much beloved by elementary and secondary school educators who incorporate it in values clarification and decision-making programs. Teachers are instructed to be "accepting and non-judgmental" regardless of how repugnant or anti-social students' ideas may be. All opinions are held to be valid so long as they are freely chosen and the product of rational processes.

Dr. Paul C. Vitz, Professor of Psychology at New York

University, challenges the notion that a world view which incorporates God is intellectually less respectable than one which leaves Him out. To Vitz and to many whose children attend public schools:

> . . . the issue of the existence of God is an absolutely central one for any discussion of morality, as well as for any discussion of the problems of contemporary youth. In the last 30 years, there has been a great deal of evidence for the correctness of Dostoyevsky's remark, "If God does not exist, then anything is permitted."[8]

It is not necessary to share Vitz's beliefs to argue that constitutional protection of religious freedom includes parents' rights to bring their children up without interference or subversion from the public school system.

Attorney William Ball, whose legal career is devoted to defending these rights, puts the issue in the form of a question:

> Can we venture to say that a handful of people who don't like Bible reading and praying have rights superior to other people who do not want their children's moral structure destroyed?[9]

The escalation of violence and unruly behavior in the nation's classrooms raise questions about how schools influence children's values. Schools surely must be taken into account along with the erosion of family life and a surfeit of violence on television.

Educational historian Diane Ravitch suggests that the standards schools set, or fail to set, do more to mold character than any number of citizenship courses.

Students learn to be industrious, responsible, dependable and diligent by meeting requirements for performance and behavior. In her opinion, the permissive educational trends of the past 15 or more years have had a detrimental effect on character development.

Ravitch admits to having gone along with the dominant view for a time:

> The main reason, I believe, for my error was that in 1973 my older child was only 11, not yet of the age where the pressures

of the peer group compete actively against parental values. Now that he is 18, I realize how absurd it is to claim that he can do whatever he wants to as long as he arrives at his decision thoughtfully. I now understand that it is possible to reach very bad decisions, with terrible consequences for oneself and others, through rational processes.[10]

From time to time, Congress has directed various agencies to determine if there are adequate provisions to protect children in federally funded experimental programs. In 1977, the General Accounting Office reported its findings:

When asked if mechanisms exist at the federal level for protecting students from unwanted value changes or undesirable materials, Office of Education officials stated that they were not formally involved in these matters.[11]

Similarly, the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects found that procedures at the local level did not prevent children from being placed at risk:

A major difficulty in the protection of subjects of research involving educational practices is that research may be approved by a school board, and introduced into a school system, in ways which afford no opportunity for parents to consent or to refuse to consent, and no opportunity to select an alternative educational setting.

The report further noted that:

Research designed to evaluate the effectiveness of innovative practices in education (e.g., new teaching techniques, new curricula or modifications of the delivery system) may place children at risk with respect to their education as well as with respect to the risks noted above.[12]

The risks referred to were loss of privacy, loss of self-esteem, and psychological stress.

Researchers have also determined that federal financing of experimental programs has not been justified by the results:

A 3-year study of many expensive innovations of the past 20 years—including team teaching, open classrooms, use of paraprofessional aides and ways to individualize instruction has

> found that they make little difference in student achievement ... of the 30,000 students examined, those enrolled in programs with a moderate emphasis on innovation and individualization showed the greatest improvement on standardized reading and mathematics tests.[13]

The intransigence of the public school establishment, despite research evidence and parental objections, unified the players of the floating crap game into what Joan Masters of Guardians of Traditional Education in Maryland called "a volunteer army."[14]

Difficult to describe because of its diversity, it has included at various times: Hispanic parents in Tucson, Arizona who obtained a court order to have phonics taught to their children;[15] West Virginia parents concerned about excessively violent and sexually explicit textbooks;[16] Oklahoma parents whose objections to instructional materials resulted in a Grand Jury investigation;[17] the Committee for Positive Education in Warren, Ohio, led by the late Jo-Ann Abrigg who was concerned about educational materials biased against traditional values;[18] Barbara Morris in California;[19] People for Better Education in Anchorage, Alaska;[20] The Brown House Report In Davenport, Iowa;[21] Citizens for Public Education in Portland, Oregon.[22] It would require more space than this chapter allows to list them all or to catalogue their concerns.

It would not be exaggerating the influence of the parents' network to credit it with being the beginning of the grassroots political awakening which was to sweep Ronald Reagan into office in 1980. It was not coincidence that candidate Reagan promised to eliminate the U.S. Education Department and reduce federal interference in the schools. Reagan was articulating a dissatisfaction with education which had become so widespread that even establishment educators such as Dean Myron Atkins of the Stanford School of Education could no longer ignore its existence:

> The schools receive support from the public, I believe to the extent that they are seen as reflecting prevailing community values. If the schools are being used as instruments to bring about changes that do not have general support ... then in

their impotence to react against those who mandate the changes, people vent their frustrations against the chosen instrument of change . . . the schools.[23]

Gallup Opinion Polls measuring the 15-year decline in public approval of the school system confirm Atkins' observation.

In the hundreds of small publications produced by the players in the floating crap game, the story is remarkably the same. The lines are drawn between the professionals and the parents—between those who pleaded for a return to basics and an end to experiments and change agentry, and those whose programs and purposes were increasingly influenced and financed by Washington, D.C.

Testifying before a congressional committee in behalf of the National Congress for Educational Excellence, a coalition of parents groups, Dr. Onalee McGraw explained what was happening:

> The 'Magic Circle' up in Pittsburgh, Pa., would not have existed unless somebody managed to dig up some Title III funds and put in this type of thing. In other words, basic education has suffered because the excess of money has been there from the Federal government and the philosophy of the educationists who obtain the federal money is to totally emphasize the psychosocial approach to education. So, parent groups around the country have grown up in response to this attack on basic education. Many groups have been in existence since 1968 or 1969. Many of them are very new because it will hit a certain area, and then parents will become very concerned and they form groups. It is a very grassroots populist type of thing, strictly funded by the parents themselves. We have no access to tax dollars.[24]

In recent years, declining enrollment, the tax revolt movement, and the national awakening to scholastic decline has caused school officials to become more conciliatory. Parents are no longer invited to opt out of the system. Too many have already done so as the rapid growth in private schools and the increasing number of children taught at home indicate.

Time will tell whether a new era of cooperation between

home and school is dawning. Parents who have been rebuffed in the past should be forgiven if they view the recent emphasis on "parent participation" with suspicion.

A National Institute of Education study of citizen involvement in public education summarizes reasons for skepticism:

> Increased citizen participation, like any policy instrument, can be used or abused. It can be exploited as a mechanism to silence unrest, to divert criticism, to reduce alienation, to co-opt the public.
>
> Participation without power is demoralizing for an informed constituency, leading to cynicism and public mistrust of the educational establishment . . . Initiatives increasing public involvement in schools must not be undertaken unless they include a commitment to begin sharing power with citizens.[25]

One of the major problems parents faced was the reluctance of public school educators to comply with requests for information. Even their own children's school records were withheld.

Obtaining instructional materials, copies of grant proposals and research about instructional methods required large investments of time and more patience than most parents could muster.

The Reading Reform Foundation,[26] the Committee for Responsible Education in Tulsa, OK,[27] the Pennsylvania Coalition for Basic Education,[28] the Mel Gablers in Longview, Texas,[29] *California Monitor of Education*[30] and the LITE (Let's Improve Today's Education) organization in Arizona, among others too numerous to mention, helped to fill this need.

No chronicle of the movement to reform education would be complete without mentioning the role of the Reading Reform Foundation and its president, Bettina Rubicam. Hundreds of thousands of children and adults are able to read today because of the dedication of Mrs. Rubicam and her troop of dedicated teachers who travel the country teaching teachers and parents how to teach reading.

The volumes of research attesting to the superiority of phonics in the teaching of beginning reading are ignored by colleges of education. Psycho-linguistics—look-say in drag—is one of the latest guessing games foisted on teachers. Lack of phonics instruction as a chief cause of illiteracy and declining academic performance has been almost totally overlooked in the recent media attention to education.

In many instances, concern about reading method is what causes parents to look deeply into what goes on in schools. Such was the case in Arizona where the LITE group was formed when parents were unsuccessful in obtaining phonics instruction in the Washington Elementary School District in Phoenix.

What began as a local effort spread to other districts, became statewide, and ended up as part of the floating crap game. Upset about chaotic open classrooms, look-say reading and programs such as MACOS, and unable to obtain satisfaction through regular education channels, Arizona parents sought relief in the political arena. They appealed to the state board of education, then to the state Legislature and finally to Congress.

Arizona Citizens for Parental Rights, chaired by Harriet Bade is an offshoot of LITE and exerted national influence when it obtained legislative support for a Parents' Rights Bill. Arizona S.B. 1312[31] became the prototype for the Landgrebe Freer Schools Act, the Buckley Privacy Amendments and the Hatch Amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1974.

The group attracted enough support, through a quarter page ad in Arizona's two largest daily newspapers, to pack legislative hearings on the Parents' Right Bill. The bill was defeated in April of 1973, after more than 15 hours of testimony and a record public attendance forced the hearings to be moved to the floor of the Senate.[32] The portion providing parental access to students' records was finally passed in May of 1974.[33] A few months later, Senator James Buckley put a similar measure into federal statute.[34]

A 1973 column by syndicated columnist Russell Kirk took note of the Arizona effort and warned: "In more states than

Arizona many parents will set their faces against educationists' aspirations to educate the whole child!"[35]

Kirk's warning was prophetic. Parents' Rights Bills on the Arizona model subsequently were introduced in Maryland in 1974,[36] Florida in 1976,[37], Wisconsin in 1979,[38] and passed in Oklahoma in 1981,[39] an effort, according to Myrtle Kelly of Stigler, OK, which was three years in the making.

Perhaps sociologists will one day explain how it was that despite distance and lack of money, these groups became a loosely knit national confederation, able to communicate with, and assist each other, and capable of generating a deluge of mail to Congress.

Embattled educators often attempted to impugn the credibility of players in the floating crap game by accusing them of secret right-wing funding sources. The favorite bogey, of course, was the John Birch Society. It just wasn't so. What money there was came from garage sales, pot lucks and mostly, out of the pockets of parents.

Representative Earl Landgrebe's[40] attempt to pass legislation restricting federal funding to programs teaching cognitive skills failed, but it provided another glimpse of the growing dissatisfaction with federal involvement in education.

> Little did I think when I introduced my Freer Education bill that I would get the kind of result which I have gotten . . . I would receive over 1,500 letters from more than 40 states . . . that I would hear from so many professional educators, superintendents, principals of schools, teachers and school board members and the president of the National School Board Association—writing to me and encouraging me to phase out federal control of education . . . the mothers and fathers came out to express their concern for what was happening to the education of their boys and girls . . . because people are stirred up and they simply are not going to take any more of this . . .[41]

The record will show that people were going to take a lot more of it before the "rising tide of mediocrity" described by the National Commission on Excellence in Education engulfed the system.

As Landgrebe pointed out, some educators were deeply concerned about federal funding. Unfortunately, for the most part, their concerns received no more attention than did the objections of parents in the floating crap game.

Political efforts to exert control over educational decision-makers were frequently defeated by claims that local control was being violated. The *Phoenix Gazette* editorial ized in 1973:

> Local control at the school district level doesn't mean control by educators and administrators, but control by the people. And if parents can't look at teaching materials or records and can't have a say on experimental programs, then local control doesn't exist.[42]

It was therefore a major victory—albeit a hollow one because regulations to put the amendment into practice weren't written—when the Hatch Amendment, incorporating the major provisions of the Arizona Parents' Rights Bill, was passed in 1978. Hatch explained the purpose of the amendment:

> Our amendment simply holds that before young children who, in many cases, have not learned to cross a street properly, become subjected to sensitivity training or some other variant of "Walden Three," that we first have the written OK of their parents or guardian.
>
> This whole problem came about when schools started becoming more concerned with children's attitudes, beliefs and emotions rather than providing them with basic education. And what we have today is a situation where dramatically fewer young children can read, write or count; but who have become worldly about sex and drugs and violence.
>
> This does not speak well for the long term emotional stability of the child; and such implicit value changes which attend teaching very young children about drugs and sex, or which challenges their faith in their parents constitute the most vile threat to the American family unit. The techniques used to change young children's attitudes and values are an invasion of privacy in the first degree . . .[43]

Only in 1984 were regulations drafted to give clout to the Hatch Amendment Can you imagine any branch of govern-

ment waiting six years to write regulations for, say, a civil rights law? Why is it that parents' rights are considered dispensable? As federal intrusion in the life of the nation grew, so did the scope of the floating crap game. Parents began affiliating with groups whose concerns transcended public education.

As early as 1972, syndicated columnist Paul Scott took note of these nascent political stirrings:

> Pro-family groups are now organizing a national coalition to vigorously oppose massive government child development programs, sensitivity training in schools, in-school sex education and the abolition of neighborhood schools.
>
> Known as the National Coalition on the Crisis in Education, this movement plans to bring the campaign to strengthen the family to the nation's capital . . .[44]

Among the groups mentioned by Scott were: "Crisis in Education Committee of Garden City, Idaho; Unified Concerned Citizens of America, Texarkana, Texas; The National Parents League, Portland, Oregon; League of Housewives, Kingman, Arizona . . ."

The Arizona Experience

According to LITE files, groups were active in no less than 50 states. Their concerns varied from the anti-busing activities of the National Association of Neighborhood Schools[45] to the New York City parents who instigated an investigation of sex education films. Bronx District Attorney Mario Merola commented: "You can be locked up for showing youths in a public theater sex films which are legal in the city's public schools."[46]

In Arizona, the school reform movement was particularly strong. In 1966, the citizens elected Republican governor Jack Williams. Williams then appointed a majority of pro-basic education board members to the Arizona State Board of Education. In 1971, board member and Maricopa County Superintendent of Schools Richard Harris warned the state's educators to "drop experimental programs and get back to basics."[47]

In 1973, a state board effort to impose standards for

graduation and promotion was defeated by the educational lobby despite the admission by a Deputy State School Superintendent that without standards, "any diploma issued in the state isn't worth the paper it's written on."[48]

The Arizona Education Association (affiliate of the National Education Association) even fought the watered down requirement that high school graduates be able to read at the ninth grade level—according to local district standards which varied widely—charging that students unable to "meet predetermined reading performance levels" were being "discriminated against."

An AEA spokesman said that imposing achievement standards would be "a denial of the unique individuality of human beings."[49]

State board president Stephen S. Jenkins, with the help of a statewide coalition of parents, led the board to adopt courses of study outlining the basic minimums to be taught in core subjects. Again, the victory was largely hollow because of the reluctance of the Department of Education to distribute the guidelines to school districts. The basic education course guides were subsequently repealed by the next state board and new superintendent. The state's educational establishment formed the Arizona Coalition on Educational Policy to protest the activities of the Jenkins' board and then Superintendent of Public Instruction Weldon Shofstall. The Coalition released a White Paper and vowed to fight this "threat" to the state's educational system.[50]

A performance based teacher certification plan suggested by Shofstall was shot down by the AEA in 1974 because, according to an AEA spokesman, it would set up a system "under which the right of teachers to continue teaching is based largely on whether children learn."

For those who might actually believe that is why teachers are in the classroom, the AEA spokesman explained, "everyone knows that whether a child learns is largely dependent on heredity and environment... It would lead to rigid, unimaginative education."[51]

Ironically, most of the recommendations of the Jenkins'

board have since become law in Arizona or are in the process of becoming so. Among these are statewide standardized testing, standards for promotion and graduation and basic skills courses of study. The Legislature has also mandated basic skills tests for prospective teachers. It should be noted that, due to public pressure brought about by media attention to the "crisis in education," the same groups that so vigorously opposed these measures in the past are now giving eloquent lip service to supporting them.

Unfortunately, a whole generation—a generation that deserved better than it got—of Arizona children has passed through the school system in the intervening years.

Since 1971, Arizona scores on the verbal portion of the Scholastic Aptitude Test dropped 42 points; compared to a national score decline of 28 points. Average math scores dropped 28 points, compared to a national score decline of 16 points.

Although national scores have leveled off during the past three years—average verbal scores went up one point and average math scores rose two points—Arizona scores have continued to plummet another 11 points on the verbal portion of the test and nine points on the math.

Yet, education spending has long been the largest item on the state budget, consuming 68 percent of all tax dollars raised in the state.[52] During the period of greatest decline, spending on education outpaced enrollment and inflation.[53]

Nationally, the story is the same. Education spending in constant dollars multiplied nearly three times over the past three decades.

In October 1983, George Roche, chairman of the National Council on Educational Research asked:

> If tripling the input did not raise the quality of education or even maintain it, what reason is there to believe that pouring additional money will do the job?

Yet, Arizona's Governor's Committee on Quality Education,[54] an educator-dominated body, recently recom-

mended more money for education, a recommendation echoed by establishment educators everywhere.

It is with a terrible bitterness that those parents who sounded the alarm more than 15 years ago—and were pilloried for their efforts—now see the same solution that caused the problem being put forth once again.

While it is true that the present crisis in education has deep roots within the educational establishment, those roots were well-watered with a flood of federal dollars.

During the 1930s, the progressive education movement exerted strong influence on American educators. Fostered by colleges of education, it can be described as a philosophy which elevates "socialization" over academic achievement. It is based on the premise that society should be restructured through the schools.

When the Soviets beat the United States into space with Sputnik, progressive education was linked to the American lag in scientific achievement. As a result, Congress appropriated funds for the National Defense Education Act in 1958. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act followed in 1965. When President Lyndon Johnson signed the bill into law he stressed the idea that federal support would enable local elementary and high schools to provide a high quality program of instruction in basic skills.[55]

Today the public is hearing that promise again. It obviously didn't work before and there is little evidence that it will work now. Why federal money failed to produce an educational renaissance was explained by the Arizona Office of Post Auditor in 1961 when the auditor was asked to respond to a legislative request to investigate the possible impact of federal funds on the state.

In a remarkably prescient report, the auditor explained that state and local agencies would be able to exercise "little discretionary authority regarding federal aid programs" whose "purposes, limits and other essential features" would be set by the federal government and would not be subject to change by the state. The auditor warned that the inducement to get a "fair share" of the aid being doled out "is overpowering and prevails over consider-

ations which would otherwise prohibit adoption of the program."

Arguments concerning academic merit, federal controls and system autonomy were disregarded in the face of the easy availability of money. Politicians and school boards found the prospect of "free-money"—funds obtained without increasing state and local taxes—irresistable.

The Arizona Post Auditor clearly foresaw the economic consequences. "When programs are financed at the local level, political pressures dictate economy and conservation but when they are financed on the federal level, the political pressures are in the opposite direction."[56]

The late Marilyn Desauliniers, a Virginia parent activist, prepared a position paper entitled "The State of Virginia—An Administering Agency of the Federal Executive" in which she explained why "so many innovative programs and laws have appeared simultaneously with identical programs and laws in other states—and without adequate discussion or debate."

Testifying before the U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means in 1971, Desauliniers observed:

> In public education . . . it has been possible to dictate the exercise of policy-making by federal agencies through selective funding. For through that simple process of funding some directions at the expense of others, it is possible to create a market for the U.S. dollar in school boards and administrations eager to adopt those practices most successful in attracting grants.

The Arizona experience with federal Special Education Law is a classic example. In 1978, The Arizona Tax Research Association made a study of special education in that state. Among the major findings were:

> Arizona taxpayers are paying more money to comply with P.L. 94-142, Education for All Handicapped, than may ever be justified by the amount of federal support.
>
> Arizona legislative action has encouraged districts to overestimate special education students and costs.

79 percent of special education students are in the three most poorly defined categories.

Districts with similar ADMs, which are contiguous to one another and share similar populations, show no comparability in the numbers of students enrolled in the three most populous categories.

Program placement judgments are influenced by pupil weighting systems and weighted formulas encourage misclassification of students for fiscal gain.[57]

The Report warns:

The danger is that the bureaucratic sorting and labeling of children can become a substitute for the rigorous work of really teaching them. The more labels we apply the more excuses we may find for lowering expectations of achievement.

Research findings regarding the effect upon students of the multitude of programs financed by the federal government are not encouraging. In a report prepared for the U.S. Department of Education in 1981 these conclusions were drawn:

As the number of federal and state programs has grown . . . it has become apparent that they can affect each other's operations and in the aggregate, produce outcomes none of them intended.

The study corroborated anecdotal evidence that "in the aggregate, the programs compete with one another for scarce local program funds, impose administrative burdens on school and district staff, and cause scheduling problems with both the core local program and with categorical programs."[58]

Unfortunately, those who need classroom instruction the most turned out to be those who got the least.

In districts with migrant Hispanic populations, students were often involved in six and seven pullouts daily . . . Their instructional day was so fragmented that they failed to receive the state-mandated curriculum. By grade five, many had received no instruction in science and social studies.

But the drum beat for more federal dollars for education

continues. It is well-orchestrated and virtually drowns out any dissenting voices.

A book entitled *Power and Process* by H. L. Summerfield remains the definitive work on how the education lobby operates. *Power and Process* was reviewed in the April 1975 issue of LITE. Parts of this review are excerpted below.

> The Washington Education lobby is a composite of many voices all seeking to influence the course of public education policy. Among them are the University Associations, School Administrators, and the Vocational Education lobby. Perhaps the most powerful of them all, however, is the giant National Education Association (NEA). The political function of the NEA is to 'raise federal dollars to increase teachers' salaries and to do it under conditions that will protect the teachers' status.' Statistically between 80 percent and 85 percent of all education dollars go for support of teachers' salaries, so any increase in federal dollars will ultimately benefit the teachers union.
>
> NEA's philosophical commitments cannot be ignored when discussing its interest in educational legislation. The NEA is on record many times over as being dedicated to using the schools to accelerate the process of social change in certain predetermined directions. This statement in the NEA Reporter of 1967 can be considered to be fairly typical of NEA objectives, 'In the United States today education has gained the power to change society against the will of the politicians.'[59] The NEA Journal of 1968 elaborates on that theme, "The most controversial issues of the 21st century will pertain to the ends and means of human behavior and who shall determine them. The first educational question will not be, What knowledge is of most worth? but What kind of human behavior do we wish to produce?"[60]
>
> Also among the lobbying groups are the well-financed foundations who are no less committed to the process of social change . . . Though they cannot lobby directly under federal tax laws, they can fund non-foundation people to work on selected projects. These non-foundation people are the ones who push foundation-financed ideas at the congressional level.
>
> Another less well-known, but highly effective and influential lobby, is the Executive branch of government itself.

Whenever crucial education bills are before Congress, literally thousands of people are brought to Washington (with expenses paid) to make personal appearances at congressmens' offices. These people have their expenses paid by the lobbies and the taxpayer pays again in salaries and substitutes' wages. Unfortunately, parents have no access to such largess . . .

As the Grass Roots See It

Players in the floating crap game learned one valuable lesson regardless of where they lived. They discovered that money was the key and that if only they could cut the flow of dollars over which they had no control, they had a chance to restore basic education and end the ideological manipulation of children.

They are painfully aware that the decline in academic achievement will not be arrested by pouring money into the system. The solution is not extra dollars, but a change in the priorities of the people in charge.

Such a change is unlikely to come from within the system. The strangle-hold of colleges of education on teacher training will have to be broken and qualified individuals from other disciplines brought into teaching. This would raise the quality of classroom instruction and would also dilute the power of the teacher unions.

The management and evaluation skills of principals and other administrators should be improved so that teachers' salaries can be based on performance criteria, including measurements of students' academic growth. The archaic salary schedule of credits earned and years in the classroom long discredited by research, should be retired from use.

The professional component of teacher education, whether it takes the form of in-service training or a fifth year beyond the undergraduate degree, must include phonics instruction for teaching beginning reading.

More time on task, homework and a disciplined environment all can be accomplished without adding a dime to the cost of education. Should these steps be taken, along with a commitment to concentrate on core curriculum, the money saved on remedial education alone would be enough to give deserving teachers a substantial salary increase.

President Reagan's tuition tax credit proposal is attractive because it appears to introduce the much needed element of competition into the monopolistic public school system. However, the risk to the autonomy of private educational institutions should be considered.

The recent Supreme Court decision in the case of Bob Jones University and Goldsboro Christian Schools gave the IRS the power to evaluate religious beliefs and deny tax exemption when belief does not conform with what the Service, in its wisdom, defines as federal social policy.

In 1978 and 1979 the IRS moved to enforce affirmative action guidelines and require private schools to fulfill rigorous conditions to prove that they are not discriminatory.

In the Grove City College case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that, even though the small Pennsylvania private college accepts no federal funds, federal tuition grants to students constitute federal funding of the college's financial aid program. The court ruled that the financial aid program must comply with Title IX regulations if students are to continue to receive federal tuition payments.

Although few would argue with eliminating unfair discriminatory policies, it is unlikely that federal intervention, once sanctioned by the court, will stop there. Homosexuality is on its way to becoming a "civil right." Could the government penalize private schools which refuse to hire homosexual teachers or which, for religious reasons, decline to follow other federal rules?

If anything has been learned over the past 20 years, it is that government's appetite for power is insatiable and that with money comes controls.

The alarm sounded by the floating crap game has now become a full scale fire drill. It would be foolish indeed to jump back into the flames.

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28. Pennsylvania Coalition for Basic Education, 1310 S. Negley, Pittsburgh, PA. Ioan Janaro.
29. Mr. and Mrs. Mel Gabler, P.O. Box 7175, Longview, Texas 75601.
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